

AMERICAN CITIZENS AMONG THE DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA

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QUESTION:

-- What has the State Department done to find out what happened to American citizens who disappeared in Argentina?

BACKGROUND:

-- Among the thousands of cases of persons reported to have disappeared in Argentina in the 1970s in the context of the war against terrorism,, the claims of two persons to U.S. citizenship were substantiated. They are:

-- Jon Pirman Arozarena, born to a U.S. citizen father in Venezuela in 1951, who reportedly was abducted from his home in Buenos Aires on April 30, 1977 by unidentified armed civilians. Formal inquiries by the Embassy to the GOA in 1977, 1978, and 1979 produced negative replies, as did other, informal inquiries.

-- Billy Lee Hunt, born in Tennessee in 1948, who disappeared in Mendoza on April 8, 1977. The family reported that it was informed Hunt was held by the Army, but neither police, Army nor Ministry of Interior authorities acknowledged his detention, and the Foreign Ministry stated it had no record of his detention or whereabouts.

-- In 1981, the family of Toni Agatina Motta, born in New York City in 1948, reported that she disappeared in Argentina in 1980 while on a trip to Latin America with an Italian national, characterized by the family as being a member of the Montoneros who had been detained under state of siege powers and then expelled from Argentina in 1974. Despite repeated inquiries through our embassies in Latin America, we have been unable to confirm Ms. Motta's presence in Argentina or any of the other countries on her itinerary.

POINTS TO BE MADE:

-- Our interest in and concern for American citizens listed among the disappeared is well known to Argentine authorities, the families concerned and human rights organizations.

-- Our Embassy has pursued all leads of new information as they became known. Since the mid-1970's, we have been actively involved in efforts on behalf of families or relatives of persons with both a claimed as well as a substantiated basis of U.S. citizenship.

-- We also have been active on behalf of hundreds of non-US citizens listed among the disappeared who have relatives or associates in the United States concerned about their whereabouts

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